

THE HHSRS HAZARDS GUIDE

The 29 things a council looks for, in plain English

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Why We Made This

Most people in lettings have heard of HHSRS and never had it explained straight. It sounds like a test you can pass or fail, and it isn't. We wrote this so you know what a council actually assesses, what drives a serious finding, and how to spot the same things on your own visits before an officer does.

This is a plain-English guide, not a legal opinion. It doesn't decide whether a home meets the standard. That call sits with the council. Your job is to know what they look at and to evidence the condition.

What HHSRS Actually Is

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is how councils in England and Wales judge whether a home is safe to live in. It doesn't work off a pass mark. An officer looks at a hazard, weighs how likely it is to cause harm and how bad that harm could be, and scores it. A high score is a Category 1 hazard, which a council has a duty to act on. A lower score is a Category 2 hazard, which they can still act on. The point for you: it's about the real risk in the real property, not a tick in a box.

The 29 Hazards, Grouped

The system covers 29 hazards. Here they are in plain terms, grouped the way the system groups them.

Cold, heat and damp

1. Damp and mould growth
2. Excess cold, a home that's too hard or too costly to keep warm
3. Excess heat

Pollutants and air

4. Asbestos and manufactured mineral fibres
5. Biocides, the chemicals used to treat mould and timber
6. Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products
7. Lead
8. Radiation, including radon
9. Uncombusted fuel gas
10. Volatile organic compounds, fumes from paints and cleaners

Hygiene, sanitation and water

11. Crowding and space
12. Entry by intruders, poor security
13. Lighting, too little natural or artificial light
14. Noise
15. Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
16. Food safety
17. Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
18. Water supply, quality and safety

Falls

19. Falls associated with baths and other sanitary ware
20. Falls on the level, trips and slips
21. Falls on stairs and steps
22. Falls between levels, windows and balconies

Electric, fire, heat and physical

23. Electrical hazards
24. Fire
25. Flames and hot surfaces
26. Collision and entrapment
27. Explosions
28. Position and operability of amenities, badly placed or awkward fittings
29. Structural collapse and falling elements

How A Council Assesses A Hazard

For each hazard an officer asks two questions. How likely is it to cause harm over the next year, given who could live here, and if it does, how serious is the harm likely to be? They combine the two into a score. The reason a cold or damp home so often scores high is that the harm is both likely and serious, especially for the very young, the elderly, or anyone with a health condition. Knowing that tells you where to look hardest.

What To Look For On Your Own Visits

You don't need to score anything. You need to spot the same conditions and evidence them.

- Damp, mould and cold. The most common serious findings. Photograph any mould, note cold rooms, check the heating actually heats and the ventilation actually ventilates.
- Falls. Stairs, handrails, trip edges, low windows without restrictors, slippery bath surfaces. Cheap to fix, easy to be caught on.
- Fire and carbon monoxide. Alarms on every storey, a carbon monoxide alarm by fuel-burning appliances, clear escape routes. Test them and log the test.
- Electrical. An in-date report, no scorching, no exposed wiring, a labelled consumer unit.
- Hygiene and water. Working sanitation, no pest or refuse issue, a legionella risk that's been considered.

Where you find something, do three things: log it in plain words, date it, and record the action and who's on it. A gap you find is a job. A gap the officer finds is a problem.

HOW HOUSECOMPLY HELPS YOU

The inspection becomes the finished report at one button.

Knowing what a council looks at is half of it. Evidencing it, every property, every visit, is the bit that eats time. That's what we do.



Time back.

Capture the condition on site, and the report builds itself.



Nothing missed.

The inspection covers the hazard areas and won't finish with a blank.



Audit-ready as you go.

Every photo dated and tied to its item, filed against the property.



Grows with the team.

Anyone runs the same standard, so findings don't ride on who visited.

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THE POINT

Want To See It On One Of Yours?

We'll set your first property up inspection-ready, free. See a sample report: <https://www.housecomply.co.uk/property-compliance-report-sample.html>. No pitch, just a look.

The screenshot displays the HouseComply web application interface for a property inspection report. The header shows 'HouseComply' and 'STAGE B - ON SITE INSPECTION'. A sidebar on the left lists inspection categories: 01 Property context, 02 Compliance documents, 03 Defects, 04 Alarms, 05 Damp & ventilation, 06 Energy upgrade, 07 Inspection photos, 08 Property-condition observations, 09 Confirm occupants, and 10 Sign-off. The main content area is titled 'INSPECTION DECLARATION' and includes a checkbox for 'I confirm the findings recorded above are accurate to the best of my professional judgement.' Below this, a section titled 'CRITICAL FINDINGS DETECTED - YOUR DECISION REQUIRED' states that 6 critical findings were found. One finding is highlighted: 'CRITICAL Duty to Manage Asbestos in Non-Domestic Premises and Common Parts'. The finding details include 'WHAT'S MISSING' (No asbestos survey or assessment document), 'HOW TO SHOW COMPLIANCE' (On site: Ask the landlord or managing agent...; Off site / follow-up: Obtain a copy of any existing asbestos survey...), and 'EVIDENCE TO CAPTURE' (A copy of the asbestos survey report or assessment document). A 'NEXT STEP' section shows a button to 'Open Compliance Documents' and a dropdown for 'YOUR RESPONSE' set to 'Acknowledged - I'm aware of this finding'. The interface is clean and professional, with a focus on clear communication of findings and required actions.

Set your first property up free →

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HouseComply

Built by HouseComply. We help you organise and evidence the property's condition and produce the audit-ready pack. The final decision stays with the council or inspector.